

REMARKS

Applicants are in receipt of an Advisory Action mailed January 8, 2004, in the present case. The Advisory Action indicates that "*the proposed amendments will not be entered because they present additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims.*"

Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's characterization of the claims as "finally rejected".

In reviewing the Office Action mailed June 27, 2003, there is nothing to indicate it is a Final Office Action. In the Office Action Summary, the Examiner has checked Box 2b: "This action is non-final."

There is nothing else in the Office Action to indicate that the Action was a "Final Office Action". As such, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the Advisory Action, consider the Amendments to the claims in the response filed November 26, 2003.

Applicants submit that the amendments to the claims put the claims in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant believes that this case is now in condition for allowance. Should there be any remaining issues that remain unresolved, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned.

sf-1633935

In the unlikely event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Assistant Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 546322000100. However, the Assistant Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: January 27, 2004

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